



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE/NOVEMBER 18, 2012

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New USGS tests cast doubt on EPA water quality testing at Pavillion, Wyoming

WASHINGTON, October 18, 2012 – API Director of Upstream Erik Milito told reporters this morning that results from recent USGS water quality testing in EPA monitoring wells at Pavillion, Wyoming raise serious questions about the adequacy of EPA practices in drilling monitoring wells and testing water samples. He said apparent EPA failures to follow sound scientific practices at Pavillion also raise concerns about the testing it is now doing in its national study on potential impacts of hydraulic fracturing on drinking water resources:

“EPA’s water quality investigation at Pavillion, Wyoming, adds to our concerns about similar testing it is conducting in its national study. Unscientific testing could produce flawed results that could result in major adverse impacts on shale energy development and the vast potential it has to contribute to U.S. jobs, U.S. economic recovery and U.S. energy security.

“We’ve looked closely at what the USGS did and at its data. The USGS did a better job. Unlike EPA, it chose not to test samples from one of the two wells that EPA drilled because that well was unable to provide representative samples due to its low-flow characteristics. Again, in the well from which the USGS did draw samples, it found that the samples did not contain several compounds of interest previously identified by EPA. In addition, while EPA has yet to acknowledge this, hydrocarbons are naturally occurring and have historically been detected in groundwater in the Pavillion area. It is not unexpected to find hydrocarbons in groundwater in a hydrocarbon-bearing formation.

“The Pavillion analysis is critically important because EPA – as part of its separate nationwide

study into potential drinking water impacts – is also drilling monitoring wells and collecting and analyzing samples in other places. If EPA thinks its investigation at Pavillion has produced scientifically useful information, then it may proceed in the same inexpert way at other testing sites, assume it is getting additional useful information, and employ that information to justify changes in public policy.

“The shale revolution is changing the face of American energy development. It’s boosting domestic oil and natural gas production, putting hundreds of thousands of people to work, and delivering added billions in revenue to state and federal governments. It’s also strengthening our nation’s energy security and reducing our trade deficit. But it could do even more, provided the federal government does not create regulatory obstacles based on flawed research.”

API is a national trade association that represents all segments of America’s technology-driven oil and natural gas industry. Its more than 500 members – including large integrated companies, exploration and production, refining, marketing, pipeline, and marine businesses, and service and supply firms – provide most of the nation’s energy. The industry also supports 9.2 million U.S. jobs and 7.7 percent of the U.S. economy, delivers \$86 million a day in revenue to our government, and, since 2000, has invested over \$2 trillion in U.S. capital projects to advance all forms of energy, including alternatives.

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